GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:94
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2000
FISHERMEN IN PAK JAIL
PALANIYAPPA GOUNDER KUMARASAMY;VAIKO

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any representation regarding the fishermen from Tamil Nadu who are presently languishing in Pakistan jail;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these fishermen were sent to Saudi Arabia and subsequently were taken into custody by Iranian authorities;

(d) if so, the details of the fact thereof;

(e) whether these fishermen were subsequently dumped in Pakistani territory by Iranian authority instead of either handing them over to India or Saudi Arabia;

(f) if so, whether the Indian Government have lodged any official protest with the Iranian Government;(g) if so, the details thereof and the response received from that Government; and (h) the action proposed to be initiated for immediate release of these fishermen and the time by which these fishermen are likely to released?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI JASWANT SINGH)
(a)-(h) On receipt of information that 19 fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu were in Pakistan custody, Government raised the matter in July 1999 with the Government of Pakistan and demanded that they be released immediately so that they could be repatriated to India. It was also learnt that these fishermen had gone to Saudi Arabia but, while fishing, had strayed into Iranian territorial waters. They were taken into custody by Iran and later the Iranian authorities pushed them into Pakistan.This matter was also taken up with the Iranian authorities through diplomatic channels on several occasions. They have assured that such incidents would not occur in future.
After repeated reminders by Government, the Government of Pakistan acknowledged the presence in its custody of the 19 fishermen in September 1999. Consular access to these fishermen was provided only on 3 January 2000. Discussions for their release as well as for the release of other Indian fishermen continue through diplomatic channels.